

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Original) A method of transmitting signalling information in a telecommunications network between peer user/application parts, the method comprising:

transferring signalling information from a first user/application part to a Message Transfer Part (MTP) level 3, the information including a destination signalling point identifier identifying the signalling point at which the peer user/application part is located;

determining at the MTP level 3, from said destination signalling point identifier, a destination address suitable for conveying the signalling information to the destination signalling point or to an intermediate signalling point en route to the destination signalling point; and

in the event that said destination address is an Internet Protocol (IP) address and port number, transferring the signalling information and the determined IP address and port number to an IP part for transmission over an IP network to the destination or intermediate signalling point.

2. (Original) A method according to claim 1 and comprising transferring the signalling information to an MTP level 2 in the event that the destination address determined by the MTP level 3 is a signalling link, and transmitting the information to the destination signalling point, or to an intermediate signalling point, over the signalling link.

3. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1 and comprising: receiving the signalling information transmitted over the IP network at the signalling point identified by said IP address and port number; and

passing the signalling information to an MTP level 3 and determining whether or not the signalling point is the destination signalling point on the basis of said destination signalling point identifier included in the signalling information.

4. (Original) A method according to claim 3 and comprising passing the signalling information to the peer user/application part in the event that the receiving signalling point is the destination signalling point.

5. (Original) A method according to claim 3 and comprising determining at the MTP level 3 a further destination address, on the basis of the destination signalling point identifier, suitable for conveying the signalling information to the destination signalling point or to another intermediate signalling point. if the receiving signalling point is not the destination signalling point.

6. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1 and comprising providing a look-up table at a transmitting signalling point, which table maps signalling point identifiers to IP addresses and port numbers or to signalling links.

7. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1 and comprising providing an adaptation level between the MTP level 3 and the IP part at the originating signalling point, as well as at intermediate and destination signalling points, the adaptation layer listening to a predetermined port number to receive and process incoming TCP connections or UDP packets and providing an interface between the MTP level 3 and TCP/UDP levels.

8. (Original) A method according to claim 7, wherein the adaptation layer monitors the availability of MTP 3 levels at remote signalling points and reports network events to the associated MTP 3 level.

9. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein the signalling point identifier comprises a Network Indicator (NI) and a Signalling Point Code (SPC), where the NI identifies a network and the SPC identifies a signalling point within that network.

10. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein the signalling point identifier has a Network Indicator plus "Network Identifier - Network Cluster - Network Cluster Member" format.

11. (Original) Apparatus for transmitting signalling information in a telecommunications network between peer user/application parts, the apparatus comprising:

first processing means implementing a Message Transfer Part (MTP) level 3 for receiving signalling information from a first user/application part, the information including a destination signalling point identifier identifying the signalling point at which the peer user/application part is located, the MTP level 3 determining from said destination signalling point identifier, a destination address suitable for conveying the signalling information to the destination signalling point or to an intermediate signalling point en route to the destination signalling point; and

second processing means implementing an IP part for transmitting the signalling information and the determined IP address and port number over an IP network to the destination or intermediate signalling point, in the event that said destination address is an IP address and port number.